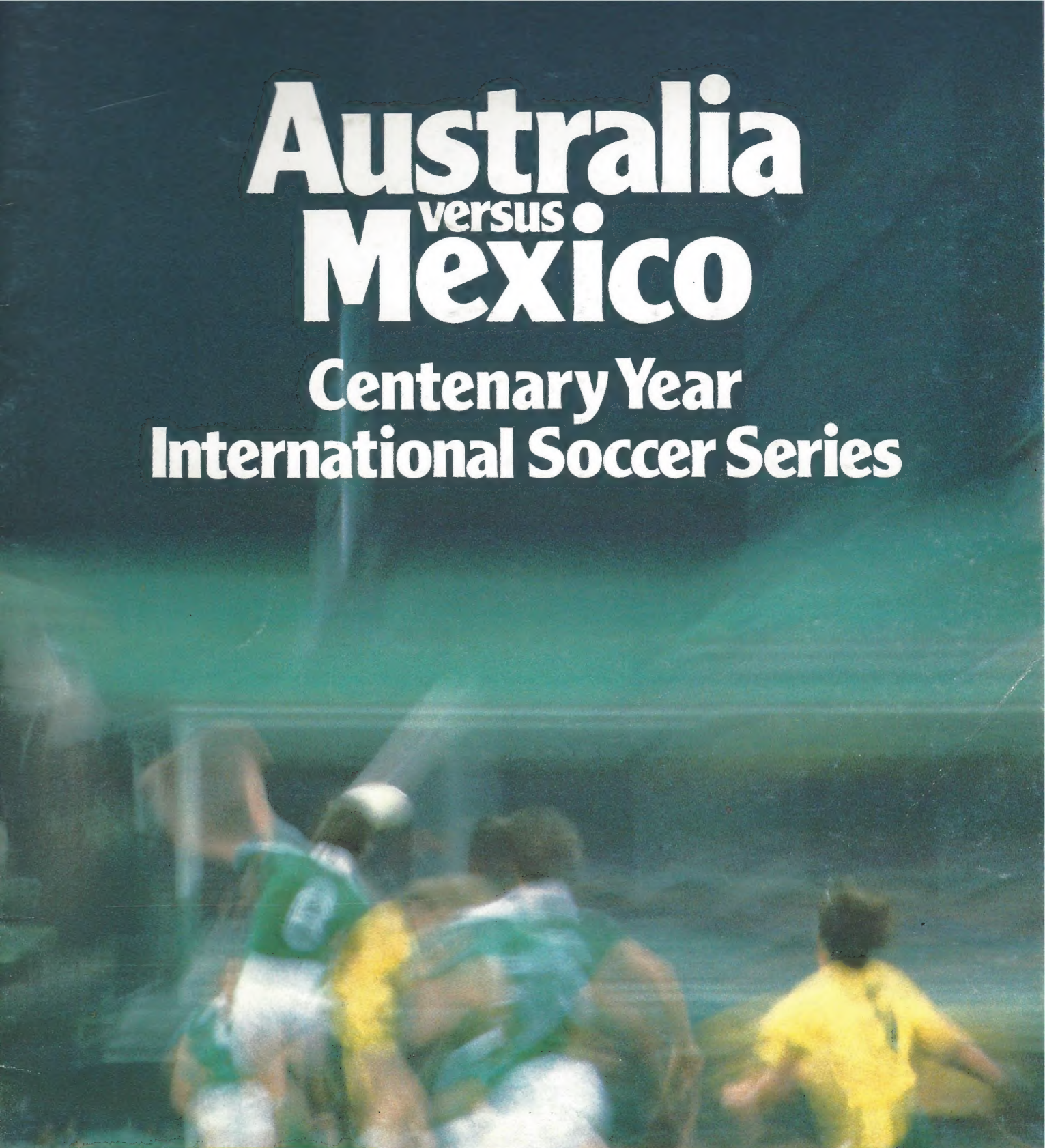
Australia versus Mexico

Centenary Year International Soccer Series



1880 - 1980

AUSTRALIAN SOCCER FEDERATION CENTENARY YEAR OF SOCCER

Sydney Cricket Ground, August 24th, 1980
Olympic Park, August 26th, 1980

Official Souvenir Programme

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Message from the President

It gives me great pleasure to welcome to Australia Mr. Ramon Martinez, leader of the Mexico delegation, the accompanying officials and the players of the Mexico National team who have come to Australia to play two international matches as part of the Centenary celebrations of this Federation.

We all remember the visit of the Australian National team to Mexico City in December 1970, when as the concluding game in a 15 match tour of the world, the Australian team was defeated 3-0 by a highly competent Mexican team in the year when Mexico hosted the finals of the FIFA World Cup.

Today provides the opportunity for the Australian team to turn the tables and avenge the defeat of the first ever match between the two nations.

Notwithstanding the friendly rivalry that now exists, it has been a most rewarding experience over the last decade since the visit to Mexico of enjoying a most friendly period of co-operation and understanding between the two National Associations. As a result of this visit I feel sure that we can look forward to even closer understanding and an opportunity for the Australian team to pay a reciprocal visit to Mexico in the near future.

Finally I trust that you will enjoy your short stay in Australia and again thank you for travelling so far to join in our celebrations.

Sir Arthur George

Message from the President of Federation De Futbol

To all the people of Australia:

It is with great honour that we are sending our National Team to play in your country. The distance between our country and yours are great but through this great game of soccer we hope to bring our friendship very close.

I thank your Federation for this opportunity and hope that you give us the honour of receiving you in Mexico in the near future.

Our country will open arms to all the sportsmen from Australia in this new relationship that we are beginning with this game in your beautiful country.

Thank you for welcoming us in your country.

Yours truly,
Rafael del Castillo

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Message from Rudi Gutendorf

Australia's National Coach

I am very pleased that the Federation has negotiated and arranged these two vital international matches for the Australian team as a further build-up and opportunity for preparation towards our aim of qualifying for the 1982 FIFA World Cup Finals to be played in Spain.

To some extent the Mexican team is not well known in Australia even though it has qualified for the last three World Cup Finals. I however, have a very high regard for the Mexican players and well remember some very tough encounters when I was the Coach of the Chile National team.

I have noticed in the squad eight or nine of the players who performed extremely well in the World Cup Finals in Argentina and I had an opportunity of seeing the team on that occasion and they are very formidable opponents.

I know that coach Raul Cardennas is anxious to obtain two victories as part of his preparation for their first elimination match against Canada in October of this year, so we can be sure of a hundred per cent effort from his players.

For the Australian players, it is the continuance of what has been an extremely hard season, demanding in respect to the commitments with the National team and of course the important Philips Soccer League competition.

I am grateful to all for the co-operation they have given to me during this season and particularly the Philips League clubs. I realise that the demands on players are high but I feel sure all concerned appreciate the paramount need to prepare the Australian squad adequately for the tremendous task ahead in the 1981 season.

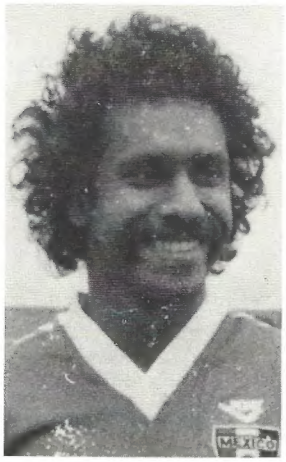
We can win the two international matches against Mexico but it is bound to be a very difficult task.

MEXICO

Jose Requenes
Age 24 — born October 12, 1955
Club: Universitario De Nuevo Leon
Position: Goalkeeper
Played World Cup 1978

Alfredo Garduno
Age 23 — born November 21, 1956
Club: Club Dep. America
Position: Defence
Played World Cup 1978

Guillermo Sanchez
Age 26 — born May 18, 1954
Club: Club Dep. Cruz Azul
Position: Midfielder
Played World Cup 1978

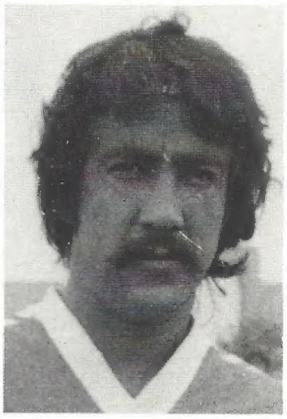


Cristobal Martinez
Age 23 — born July 25, 1956
Club: Club Dep. America
Position: Forward
Played World Cup 1978

Enrique Zarza
Age 22 — born September 2, 1957
Club: Club Dep. U.N.A.M.
Position: Midfielder
Played in World Cup in 1978 and World Youth Championships in 1977

Juan Castro
Age 21 — born May 17, 1959
Club: Club Dep. America
Position: Midfielder
Played in World Youth Championships 1979

Ignacio Bahena
Age 23 — born July 22, 1956
Club: Club Dep. Zacatepec
Position: Goalkeeper



Jorge Lorenzana
Age 22 — born August 14, 1957
Club: Dep. Cruz Azul
Position: Defence

Ramon Jimenez
Age 26 — born August 2, 1953
Cl
P

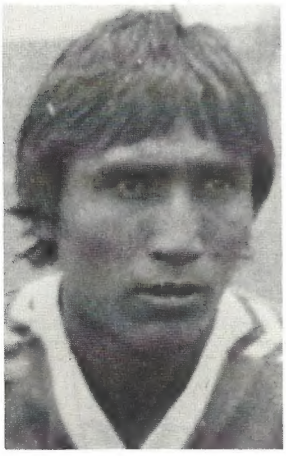
Pedro Munguia
Age 22 — born June 29, 1958
Club: Club Dep. Toluca
Position: Midfielder

Mario Guzman

Age 24 — born February 11, 1956
Club: Dep. America
Position: Defence

Jose Ramirez

Age 21 — born December 24, 1958
Club: Dep. Toluca
Position: Defence



Jose Arzola

Age 22 — born October 20, 1957
Club: Club Dep. Atlante
Position: Midfielder

Mario Rojas

Age 27 — born September 2, 1952
Club: Club Dep. Toluca
Position: Midfielder
Played in World Cup 1978

Hugo Marquez

Age 21 — born July 11, 1958
Club: Club Dep. U.N.A.M.
Position: Forward
Played World Cup 1978

Agustin Ponce

Age 22 — born October 16, 1958
Club: Club Dep. America
Position: Forward

Hector Garcia

Age 26 — born August 11, 1954
Club: Club Deo. Neza
Position: Forward

Gregorio Espinoza

Age 27 — born January 30, 1953
Club: Club Dep. Monterrey
Position: Goalkeeper

Ignacio Ocaranza

Age 26 — born July 31, 1953
Club: Dep. Cruz Azul
Position: Defence
World Cup player in Argentina 1978

Armando Ponce

Age 21 — born October 16, 1958
Club: Club Dep. America
Position: Defence

Mario Calderon

Age 22 — born October 20, 1957
Club: Club Dep. Zacatepec
Position: Midfielder

Eduardo Guzman

Age 22 — born May 14, 1958
Club: Club Dep. Atlante
Position: Forward
Played in World Youth Championships in 1977 and World Cup 1978

Ricardo Flores

Age 22 — born August 8, 1957
Club: Club Dep. Guadalajara
Position: Forward

Sergio Rios

Age 22 — born November 27, 1957
Club: Dep. Cruz Azul
Position: Defence
Played in World Youth Championships in 1977

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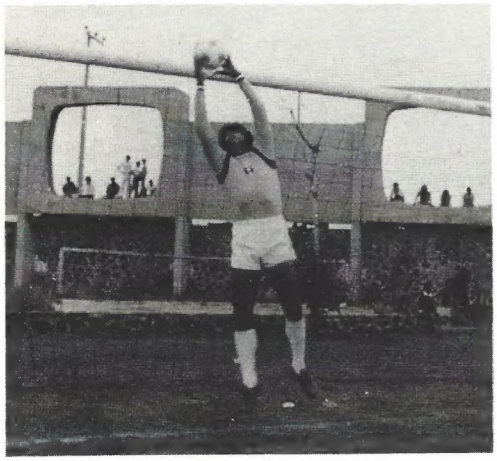
Mexico in action



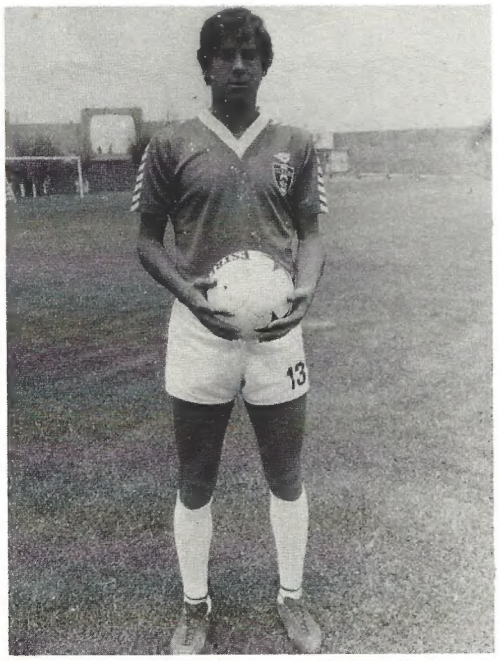
Mexico's strength

Jose Requenes *Goalkeeper*

Age 24. Height 6'1". Weight 165 lbs.
Experience — 36 international games. Played for Mexico since 1976. Voted Mexico's best goalkeeper in 1977, '78, '79, '80. Played in World Cup in '78 in Argentina. No. 1 'keeper during CONCACAF elimination tournament. Currently plays for Universitario of Nuevo Leon. 1980 runner-up in Mexican League and National Champion in 1978. Named best goalkeeper in North America in 1979. Professional player since 1975. Debut with National Team in 1977 versus Peru. Married with two daughters.

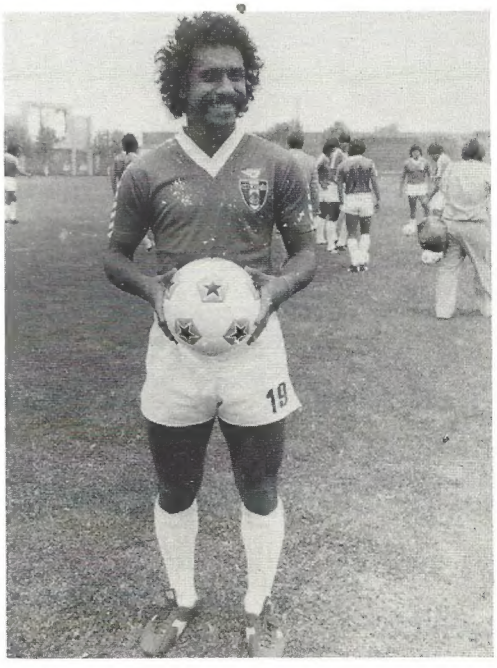
Alfredo Garduno *Centre Back*

Age 23. Height 6'0". Weight 160 lbs.
Member of Mexico's National Team since 1977. Played in World Cup in Argentina. Experience — 26 international games. Plays for Club America of Mexico City. Voted best defender of Mexico in 1978 and 1979. Champion with Club America in 1977 — most valuable player in CONCACAF tournament in 1977. He is very strong having complete control of his defensive zone. Has a great deal of experience and is an important link in the National Team defensive system. Married, one child.



Guillermo Sanchez *Midfielder*

Age 26. Height 6'2". Weight 165 lbs.
National team player since 1977. Played in World Cup in 1978 in Argentina. Experience — 25 international games. Captain of Mexico since February 1980. Currently plays for Cruz Azul — 1980 champions. An elegant and celebrated midfielder, he was compared with the great Franz Beckenbauer during Mexico's tour of Europe in 1978. Scored 12 goals in 1979 and 16 in 1980 for Champion Cruz Azul. A creative, dynamic midfielder, he moves all over the field displaying superb ball and positional skills. He is able to attack and defend. Single.



Cristobal Martinez *Right Winger*

Age 23. Height 5'6". Weight 135 lbs.
Member of Mexico's National Team since 1977. Played in Argentina in the 1978 World Cup. Experience — 30 international games. Currently plays for Club America. His transfer to Club America was the highest in Mexico in 1977 — they paid $US400,000. Regarded as one of Mexico's best forwards, he scored 22 goals in 1978, 25 in 1979 and 23 last season. He has extraordinary speed and great ability with the ball and is very hard to stop. Most of his goals are scored from close range but he also has a powerful right foot for direct free kicks.

Mexico's National Team Selection

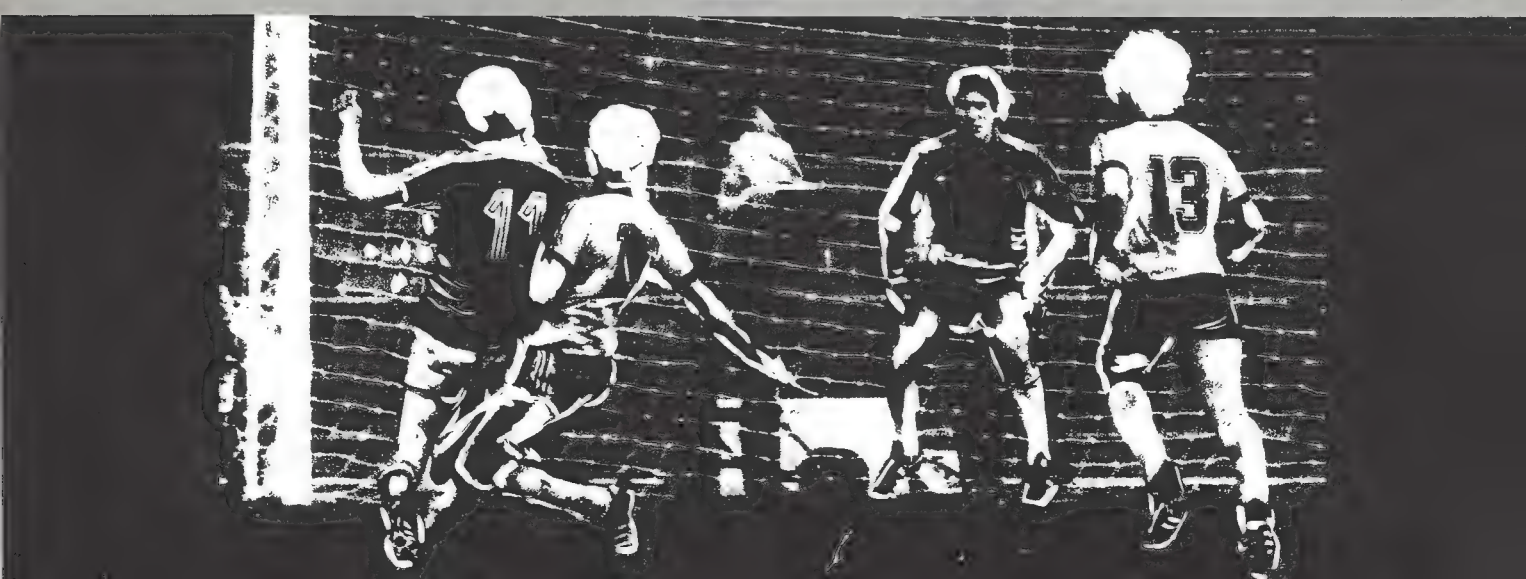
Standing, left to right: Juan Luna, Hector Tapia, Alfredo Garduno, Guillermo Sanchez, Ignacio Rodriguez, Jose Requenes, J. Guadalupe Ibarra, Mario Rojas, Pedro Munguia and Augustin Ponce.
Sitting, left to right: Cristobal Martinez, Mario Trejo, Ramon de la Torre, Jose Luis Gonzalez, Ricardo Castro Gonzalez, Arturo Vazquez Ayala, Hugo Sanchez Marquez and Jorge Lopez Malo.

Officials travelling with team

Ramon Martinez — Head of delegation
Guillermo Roaro — Vice President
Alfonso Diaz — Doctor
Victor Acevedo — Trainer
Raul Cardenas — Coach
Eduardo Monreal — Assistant Coach
Francisco Larios — Utility Man

Games played by Mexico's National Team during 1979 and 1980

January 1979	v. Russia	1-0
February	v. Guatemala	3-1
February	v. El Salvador	2-0
March	v. Spain	1-1, 3-1
May	v. Finland	2-2
July	v. Costa Rica	3-3
December	v. Ararat (Russia)	1-1
February 1980	v. Korea	0-1
March	v. Honduras	4-1
June	v. Brazil	0-2
June	v. Southampton (England)	1-0
July	v. Guatemala	2-2



Mexico a nation of Soccer lovers

by David Jack

What can Australian spectators expect from the two-match tour of Australia by Mexico's national team? Good Soccer, a fair amount of thrills, and no shortage of bite, in my opinion.

Mexico is a nation which loves its Soccer. Though never regarded as international giants, the Mexicans possess tremendous enthusiasm as players and as fans.

Through a fortunate geographical accident, Mexico is one of the most regular participants in the World Cup final 16 tournament. As members of the CONCACAF Federation, which covers North and Central America and the Caribbean, Mexico is able to look forward confidently to qualifying for the World Cup every four years. In that Group, the opposition comes from such countries as Jamaica, Canada, Puerto Rico, El Salvador, Antigua and other pygmies of the world Soccer stage.

This has brought great benefits to Mexico in terms of World Cup appearances, although one wonders if, with the emergence of North America as a force in international football, Mexico's days of an easy passage into the Cup finals are numbered.

It is interesting to compare the countries in the CONCACAF with those in the Asian Group. In 1974, when Australia represented Asia in the World Cup in West Germany, many Europeans accused the Aussies of being "intruders" because they had qualified through an easy Group. Yet Australia's opponents in the Cup elimination matches look far more formidable than the nations Mexico has to conquer to qualify.

In terms of population alone, Mexico ought to be able to produce a better international Soccer team than Australia. There are some 40,000,000 people living in Mexico and about 35,000,000 of them—unhindered by such diversions as Rugby League, Rugby Union or Australian Rules—are devotees of Soccer.

The last time I visited Mexico was with the English international team in May 1959. It was an enlightening experience—to say the least.

Although only a friendly fixture, the match attracted a full house of some 60,000 spectators to the stadium in Mexico City. The temperature touched on 100 degrees fahrenheit and England—then at one of her lowest ebbs in international football—played like punch-drunk boxers seeking the merciful release of the final bell and a return to the dressing room.

Mexico won 2-1, a result which so staggered the locals that they spent the following week in celebration of the event. Yet looking back on that Mexico-England game, my most vivid recollection is of an earthquake, the first and only one I experienced.

The Press Box was high in the roof of the main stand. Midway through the match, it started to rock . . . literally. My colleagues and I were petrified. We said our prayers. It was all over in 20 or 30 seconds and the local Mexican football writers took it all in their stride. I asked one: "Does this happen very often?' He said: "Occasionally. The last one killed 360 people!"

Oh yes . . . I remember Mexico!

In World Cup matches, Mexico usually has to accept defeat from the major nations—which is understandable. The Mexicans have appeared in no fewer than eight of the 11 Cups staged since 1930.

They have played 24 matches in the final series, losing 17, drawing four and winning only three. However, recent results suggest the game is improving in Mexico. In the past two years, the Mexicans have lost only three times from 13 outings. Korea and Brazil have beaten the Mexicans, who also lost to English club side, Southampton.

Australia, like her opponents on this tour, has also strung together some good results during the past two years of the Rudi Gutendorf reign.

People who had great affection and admiration for the 1974 Australian international squad may lament the passing from the scene of such magnificent men as John Warren, Peter Wilson, Col Curran, Doug Utjesenovic, Ray Baartz, Adrian Alston and Atti Abonyi of that era. Their successes, however, could well match the feats of the old brigade.

For instance, in the front line striking department, Gutendorf is fortunate to have at his command the flying winger Peter Sharne, the straight-for-goal Gary Cole, the powerful header Eddie Krncevic, the immaculate ball artist Ken Boden and the energetic acceptor of half-chances, Mark Jankovics.

Defensively, we may put our trust in the likes of Kevin Mullen, Steve Perry, Ivo Prskalo and Jim Tansey and, whether he is played in defence or midfield, the talented Tony Henderson.

Only in the midfield is Gutendorf likely to be short of genuine talent. If Jimmy Rooney recovers from his recent injury and if his old legs continue to serve him capably for the next two years, all should be well. But if Rooney joins his 1974 international team-mates on the retired list—as far as the national team is concerned—Australia will face problems.

It is mainly for the purpose of sorting out such problems that Mexico is playing in Australia this week.

Clearly the series will be of immense value to Gutendorf. Every time an Australian side takes the field, Rudi's World Cup planning moves a step closer to Spain.

I look forward to two entertaining Australia v Mexico games. And perhaps it is not too ambitious to also look forward to two victories for the home side.

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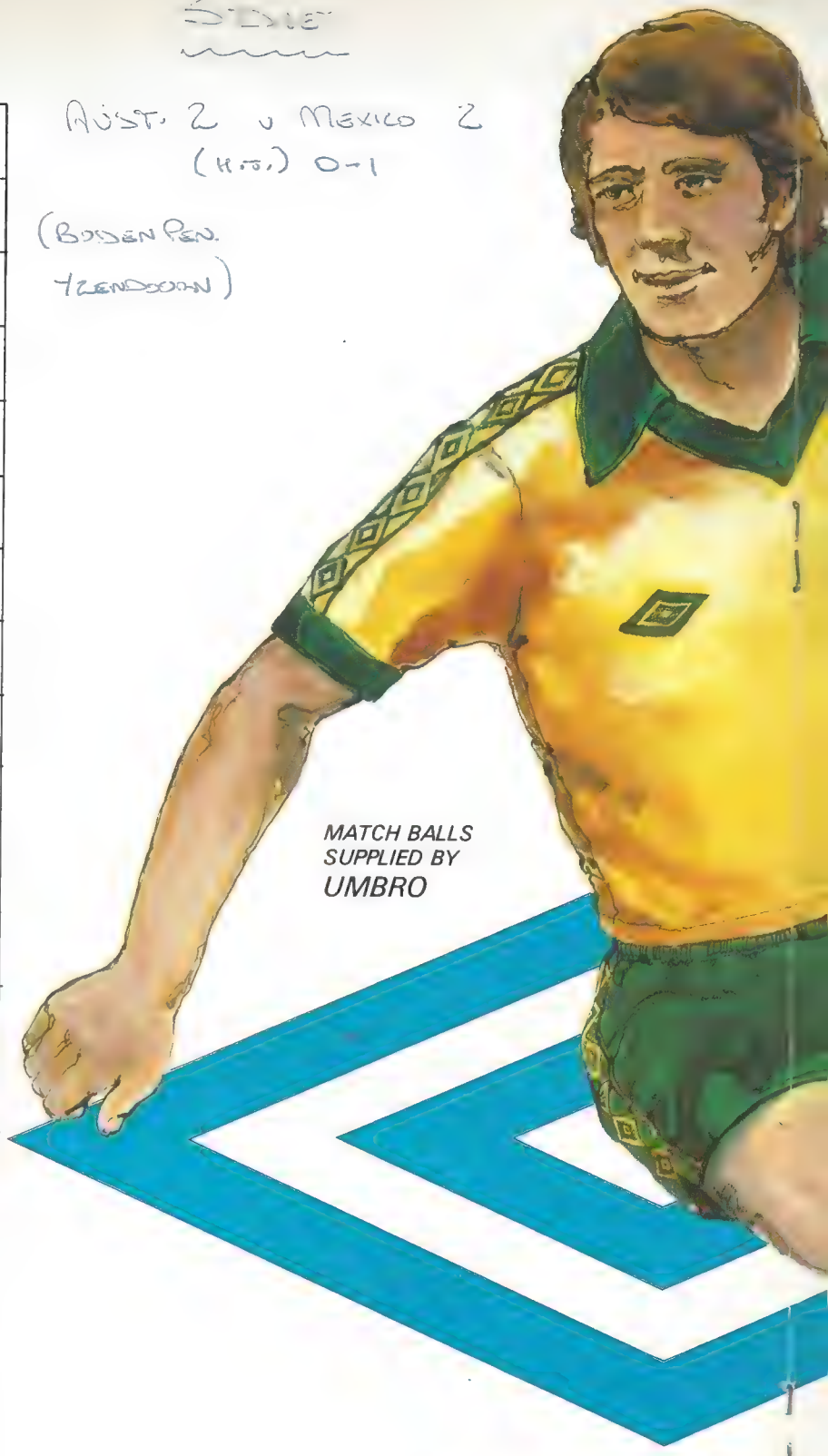
	Mario Guzman
	Jorge Lorenzana
	Ignacio Ocaranza
	Ramon Jimenez
	Sergio Rios
	Jose Ramirez
	Armando Ponce
6	Pedro Manguia
9	Juan Castro
7	Jose Arzola
	Mario Rojas
	Mario Calderon
	Enrique Zarza
	Eduardo Guzman
	Hugo Marquez
	Ricardo Flores
	Agustin Ponce
	Hector Garcia

The names of the players in both teams were correct at the time of going to press.

SIDE

AUST. 2 v MEXICO 2
(H.T.) 0-1

(BOSDEN PEN.
YZENDOORN)



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AUSTRALIA

1	Greg Woodhouse
2	Kevin Mullen STEVE PERRY
3	Jim Tansey
4	Ivo Prskalo
5	Jim Muir OFF 2ND HALF
6	Tony Henderson
7	Murray Barnes
8	Ken Boden OFF 75 MIN.
9	Peter Sharne
10	Eddie Krncevic
11	Phil O'Connor OFF 2ND HALF
12	Steve Perry
13	John Yzendoorn 2 HALF
14	Mark Jankovics 2 HALF
15	John Coyne ON 75 MIN.
16	Gary Cole
17	John Nyskohus
18	Zdravko Lujic
19	Theo Selemidis
20	Joe Senkalski
21	Arno Bertogna
22	George Christopoulos

Reserve Goalkeepers
Peter Marshall (Sydney)
Yakka Banovic (Melbourne)

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AUSTRALIAN SOCCER FEDERATION CENTENARY YEAR OF SOCCER

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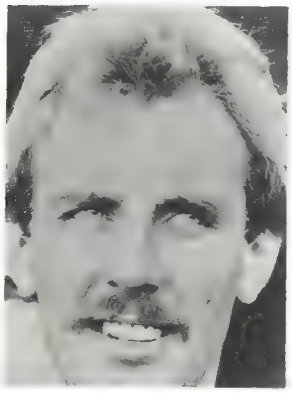
AUSTRALIA

Greg Woodhouse

Born 2.1.60

Emerged to international recognition with a series of outstanding displays in the Australian Youth Squad which contested the FIFA World Youth Tournament preliminary matches in New Zealand and in Paraguay. Has since graduated to the senior team and continues to improve on each outing. Still has a few rough edges which will disappear as more and more big match experience is obtained and Greg certainly has a big future ahead of him.



Tony Henderson

Born 14.1.54

Has a great deal of experience some of which he gained during a stint in South Africa. He then played with Canberra City before being selected by Rudi Gutendorf to gain his first international cap. Regrettably Henderson has been plagued with a nagging injury for the latter part of the 1979 season and the earlier part of this year. He is now fully recovered and will take his rightful position in his attacking midfield role.

Ivo Prskalo

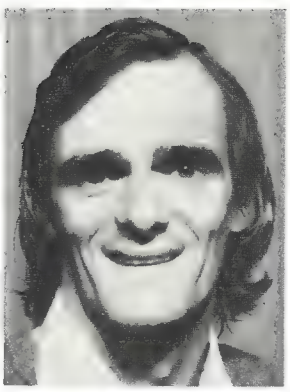
Born 2.1.48

A player of outstanding experience and knowledge of the game, experience which was gained by playing in First Division football for Yugoslavia. Since moving to Australia he has been recognised by coach Gutendorf as a key player. He has been voted Player of the Year in 1979 after taking Marconi to the top of the Philips League table. Prskalo with his wealth of experience will prove to be a very valuable acquisition in the Australian team over the next two-year period.

Jim Tansey

Born 8.8.53

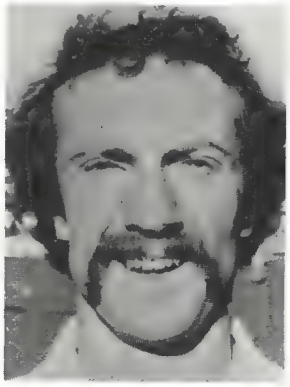
First emerged as a serious contender for the left-back position when selected by former coach Jimmy Shoulder. After the unsuccessful World Cup bid in 1977 it appeared that Tansey would drift into the international shadows but with some tremendous performances for his club Heidelberg he has ensured himself a regular place in the Australian team due mainly to his rugged defensive tackling and his very quick forays along the left flank. He is a very dangerous opponent.



Jim Muir

Born 30.1.49

Has recently moved to Marconi where he has added considerable toughness to the defence and has made a great job of replacing the injured Tony Henderson. Is under consideration for the Australian first team squad but has yet to thoroughly prove himself in the eyes of the National Coach. Perhaps the series of matches against Ireland and Chile will provide this opportunity.



Steve Perry

Born 5.5.54

Having a wonderful revival with Brisbane City Club and has through pure hard work and dedication fought himself back into the Australian squad after being on the fringe of regular selection for many years. This determination and sheer hard work approach of Perry caught the eye of coach Gutendorf and in recent matches Perry has provided a number of notable performances for Australia.

Peter Sharne

Born 23.3.56

This player is a wonderful tribute to the Marconi youth policy and also to the attacking flair that the Marconi club has brought to the Philips Soccer League. In this environment Sharne has been able to use his speed and ball control and is causing havoc amongst opposition full-backs. There is a big future ahead for this player and he can contribute a great deal to our possible success in the World Cup matches ahead.

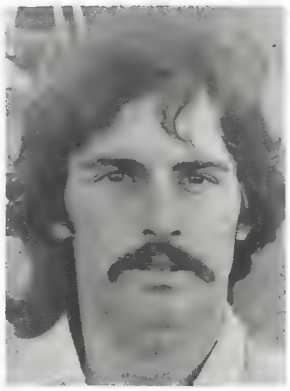
Gary Cole

Born 5.2.56

A player who has risen particularly quickly to the peak of Australian soccer. He is having a tremendous season with his club Heidelberg and has performed extremely well when playing for the Victorian State team against many visiting touring teams. Big in stature and in courage, Cole will cause havoc to any defence if he is allowed to use his speed and to be left in the slightest way unmarked. He is sure to play a major part in any success the Australian team will have in the international matches ahead.

1880 - 1980

AUSTRALIAN SOCCER FEDERATION CENTENARY YEAR OF SOCCER



Murray Barnes

Born 16.1.54

Tall central defender who has caught the eye of coach Gutendorf in recent months and has regained his position in the Australian squad after some exciting displays with his club Sydney City in the current season. He is a hard seasoned campaigner who has been capped on 17 occasions.

John Yzendoorn

Born 17.9.55

Has already had a tremendous season with his club Heidelberg and while not yet capped for Australia he seems certain to do so in the season ahead. He is a dangerous man when in the same team as striker Gary Cole and in a recent Philips League match was voted man of the match having laid on three of the four goals scored by his side.

Eddie Krncevic

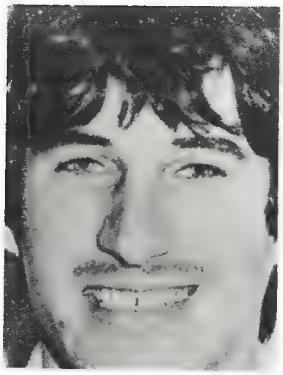
Born 14.8.60

Played in the Australian Youth Team in New Zealand in 1978 and in Paraguay in early 1979. As a result of his performances then and his continued good form with the Marconi club, as predicted by National Coach, Rudi Gudendorf, he has forced himself into the Australian first team squad. Naturally a player who draws as many goals as Krncevic does becomes a target for rough and aggressive defensive play and of late he has experienced some of the problems that can arise from this close attention.

George Christopoulos

Born 11.12.60

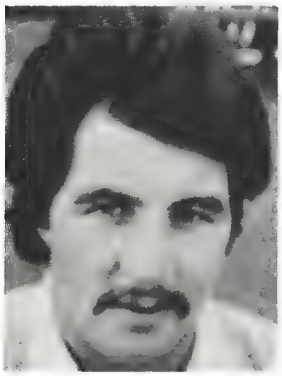
Another local product developed in Victoria and who played a massive part in the success of the young Socceroos team that won the first section of the World Youth Tournament in New Zealand in 1978. He has since commanded a first team place with South Melbourne and as a central defender-libero he fits into the future plans of coach Gutendorf.



Yakka Banovic

Born 12.11.56

Young brilliant goalkeeper of the Heidelberg club who is currently the subject of considerable interest by the English club Derby County. A brilliant acrobatic performer, very keen to overcome any technical deficiencies that may now exist and this is borne out by constant coaching and training sessions that he carries out outside of the normal training routine. Australia is indeed fortunate to have such brilliant potential in goalkeepers ready to step into the national squad.



Kevin Mullen

Kevin is another young man who has been on the edge of selection for a season or two, but he has been held back by his mercurial temperament on the field. This is at complete variance with his sunny disposition off the field—and a complete surprise to the player himself who usually feels his indiscretions have been unduly harshly punished. If he could control his displeasure with the opposition and the officials as effectively as he can control the ball and his passing, he would be an automatic selection as Australia's right back.

Ken Boden

Born 5.7.50

Has proved himself to be one of the most effective strikers ever to come to this country—particularly when he is playing with the Australian team he is positioned in such a way as to make the most of his valuable skill and speed and to provide an unenviable task for opposition defenders. He is bound to revel in the situation of participating in the great many international matches which are programmed for this year.

Theo Selemidis

Born 27.10.59

Another wonderful discovery from the World Youth Tournament team who has now forced his way into the Heidelberg team. This player has excellent ball control and speed and in the recent clash against A.C. Milan he teamed up splendidly providing plenty of the ball to Cole and Jankovics and being instrumental in placing a through ball to Jankovics to enable the Australian team to win 2-1.

John Nyskohus

Born 16.10.51

First came to the notice of Jimmy Shoulder who regularly played him in the World Cup matches in 1977. Has found the going tough with his club Adelaide City this year where there is a goal famine and he is looking to provide some of the original attacking skill and initiative which has made him in previous seasons an extremely dangerous forward. The forthcoming internationals provide a severe test for this player.

John Coyne

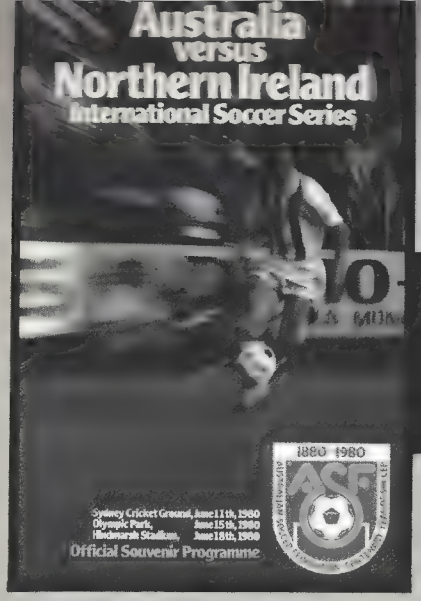
Born 18.7.51

Had a particularly successful season with Brisbane City in 1979 and has continued to play extremely well when with the national team during the current season. He is a very aggressive player and one that will certainly make his mark when playing against our Asian opponents in the forthcoming World Cup series. Gutendorf, whilst appreciating the need for skills, also appreciates the need for rugged, strong, offensive tackling and Coyne provides this type of play.

Mark Jankovics

Born 5.4.56

Another local product from the St. George area where he played with the St. George team in the first Philips League season and then moved on to Marconi where he has settled down and has scored a great number of goals. His performance is sometimes marred with some inconsistency but this is often the case with great attacking players with a flair for scoring goals and he has every opportunity of becoming a regular national team striker.



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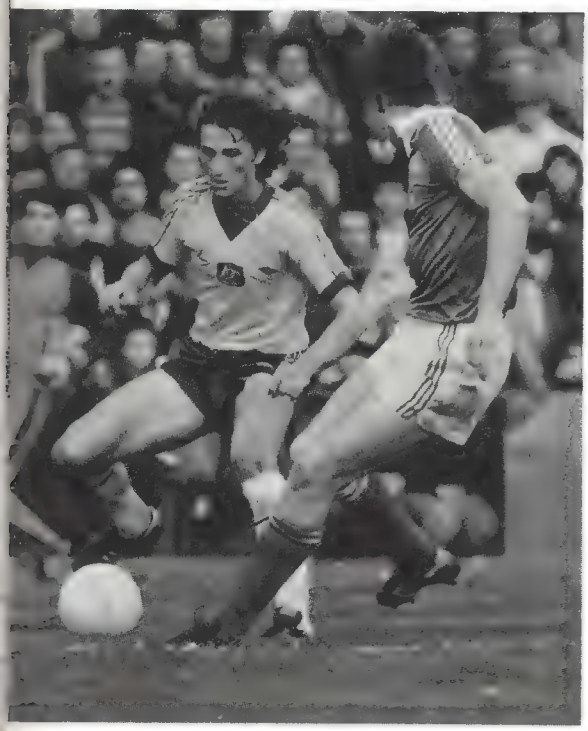
Australia in action against Northern Ireland



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Australian Team v Northern Ireland, Melbourne

Peter Sharne, Ivo Prskalo, John Yzendoorn, Murray Barnes, Tony Henderson, Jim Tansey, Yakka Banovic, Jim Muir, Gary Cole, Eddie Krncevic, Jim Rooney.

Early Match Details

Australian World Youth Championship Squad v New South Wales Youth Team.

Kick-off 1 p.m.

Match Officials

Australia v Mexico
Sydney Cricket Ground, 24th August, 1980. Kick-off 3 p.m.

Referee — Tony Boskovic
Linesmen — Barry Wilkinson, Doug Rennie
Reserve Referee — Peter Rampley

Australia v Mexico
Olympic Park, Melbourne, 26th August, 1980. Kick-off 7.30 p.m.

Referee — Chris Bambridge
Linesmen — Jim Brennan, Sam Zoumas
Reserve Referee — Evan Venios

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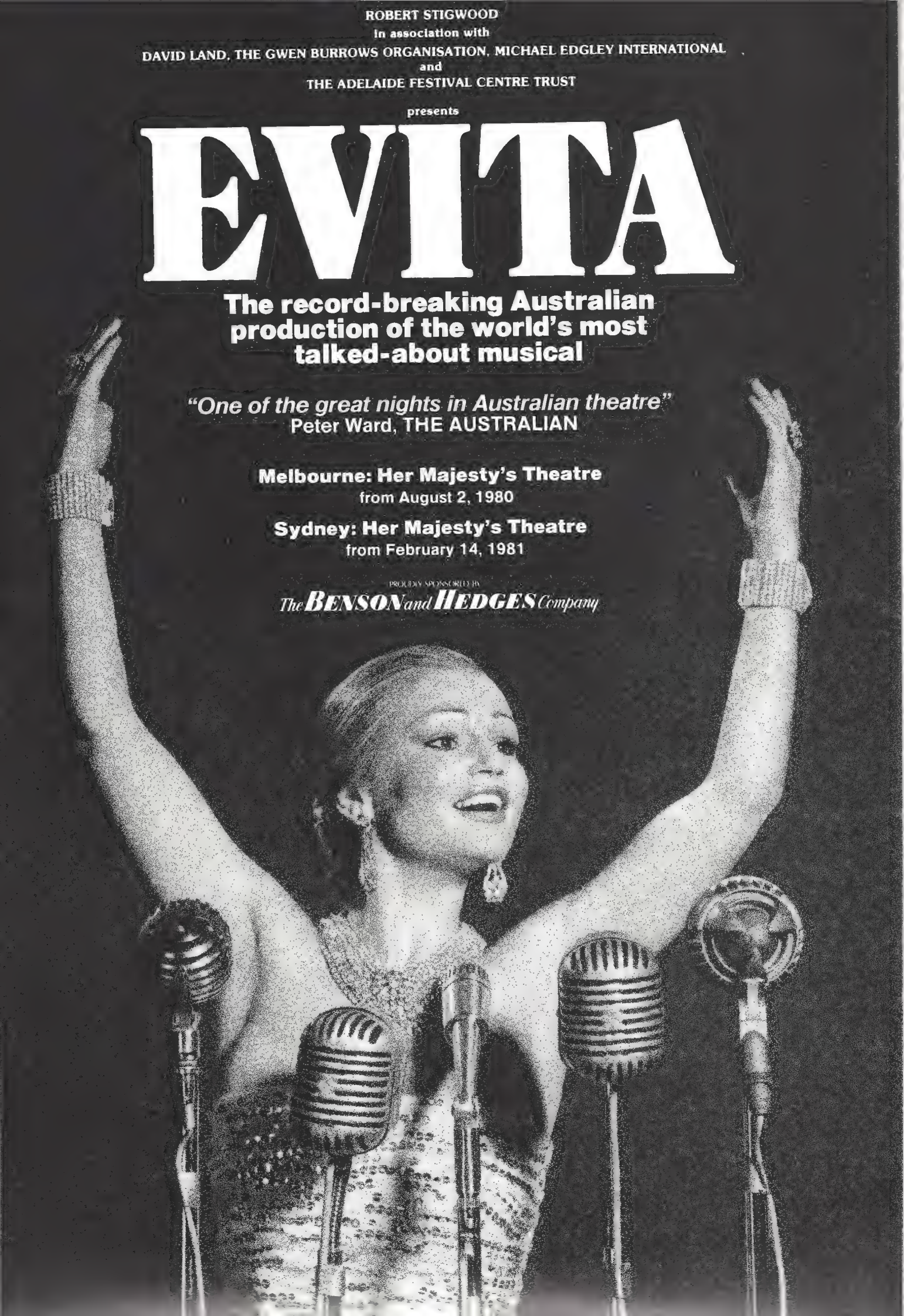
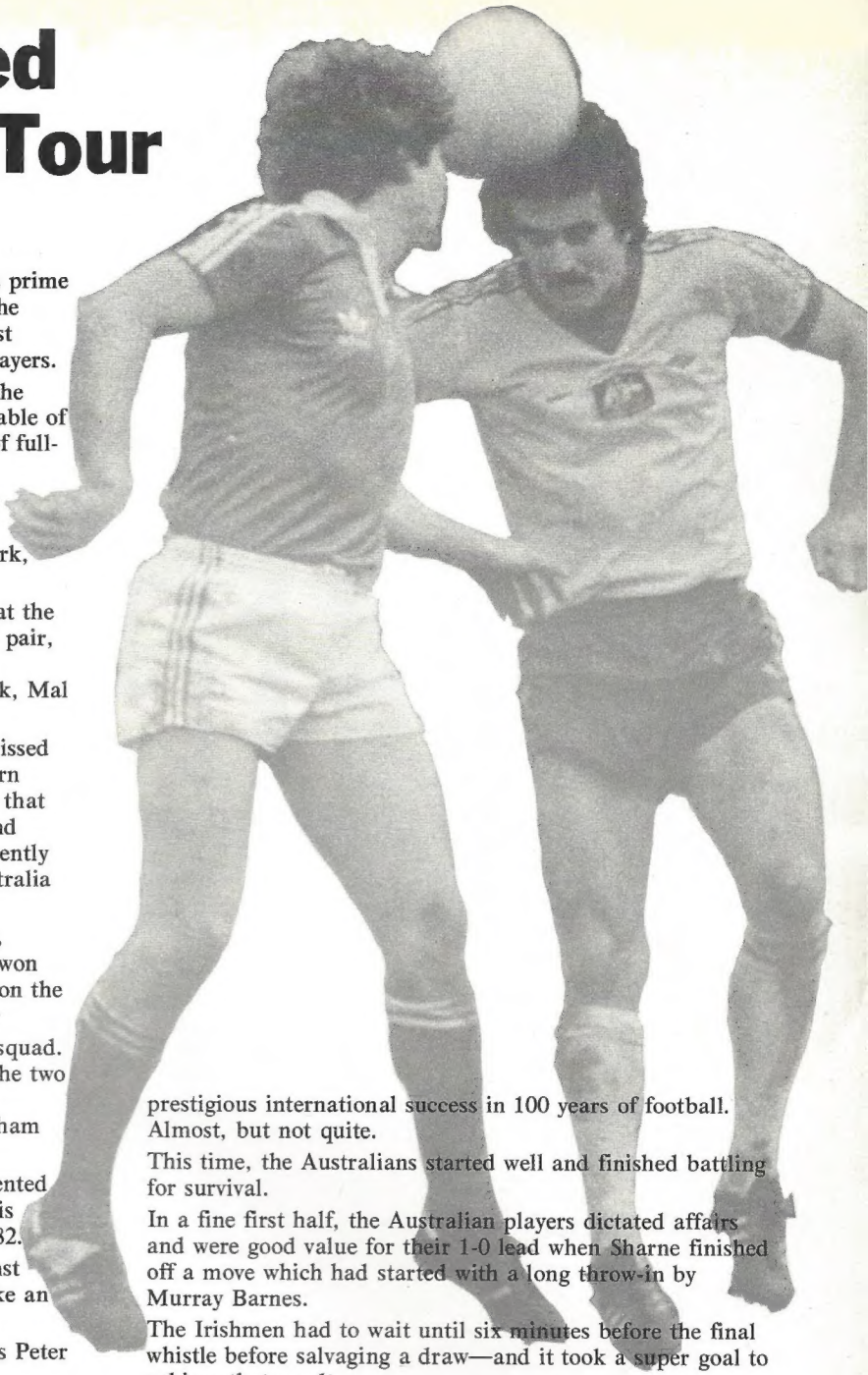


Lessons learned from the Irish Tour

by David Jack



With qualification for the 1982 World Cup Australia's prime target—indeed, at times, it appears the only target—the three-match series against Northern Ireland was a most valuable exercise for coach Rudi Gutendorf and his players.

Although Australia failed to win any of the matches, the results indicated that Gutendorf's men were quite capable of matching their skills against a top international side of full-time professionals.

To refresh memories, Northern Ireland won 2-1 at the Sydney Cricket Ground and at Adelaide's Hindmarsh Stadium, while the other international, at Olympic Park, Melbourne, ended in a 1-1 draw.

As might be expected, some detractors pointed out that the Irish side was not at full strength because the Arsenal pair, Sammy Nelson and Pat Jennings, Manchester United midfielder, Sammy McIlroy, and Luton Town full-back, Mal Donaghy, were not in the touring party.

Yet let us not forget that some of those players also missed the British Home International series in which Northern Ireland amazed all the tipsters by finishing on top. In that series, the Irishmen finished above mighty England and Scotland. With such a magnificent achievement so recently to their credit, Northern Ireland did not travel to Australia on a holiday trip.

Having waited some 66 years to win the British crown, manager Billy Bingham stressed that his team's hard-won elevation in prestige was not to be lightly squandered on the playing fields of Australia.

There were players of considerable talent in the Irish squad. For instance, Jennings' goalkeeper deputy Jim Platt, the two Nicholl boys, Jim and Chris, Noel Brotherston, Gerry Armstrong, Terry Cochrane and the excellent Nottingham Forest midfielder, Martin O'Neill.

Against such distinguished full-timers, Australia presented the nucleus of the side which we all hope will carry this country to the finals of the World Cup in Spain in 1982.

How good is that Australian team? The matches against Northern Ireland gave us the ideal opportunity to make an assessment and the result was encouraging.

One player stood out above all others. That player was Peter Sharne of Marconi Fairfield.

The speedy winger managed to score a goal in all three international matches and, without consulting the record books, it is surely the first time any local player has achieved that.

Just as Sharne had teased and tormented England's captain Trevor Cherry a few weeks earlier in the Centenary International, so he carried on the good work against the Irishmen.

The series opened on a quiet note for the home side. At the SCG, the first 45 minutes yielded only one scoring chance for Australia when Mark Jankovics headed over the bar from a Sharne cross.

The Irishmen were 1-0 ahead at half-time and 2-0 in front soon after.

But the Aussies came home powerfully, pulled back one goal through Sharne and missed other chances which would have tied the game.

On to Melbourne, then, for the second instalment of the Soccer saga.

It was a very different Australia this time. The players, having traded blow for blow with Ireland in Sydney and come off only one goal in arrears, realised that the visiting full-time professionals were not Soccer supermen. The Irish were a capable international team, but surely not an unbeatable one. In fact, the Olympic Park spectators were almost treated to what would have been Australia's most prestigious international success in 100 years of football. Almost, but not quite.

This time, the Australians started well and finished battling for survival.

In a fine first half, the Australian players dictated affairs and were good value for their 1-0 lead when Sharne finished off a move which had started with a long throw-in by Murray Barnes.

The Irishmen had to wait until six minutes before the final whistle before salvaging a draw—and it took a super goal to achieve that result.

Martin O'Neill was the scorer with a magnificent long range shot on the turn.

One narrow defeat and one draw from two outings . . . that was the state of the series as Australia and Northern Ireland lined up in Adelaide for the final joust.

This match followed the Melbourne pattern. Again, the Australians dictated the first 45 minutes. Again, the persistent Sharne put his team ahead 1-0. And had the same Sharne and Ken Boden not thrown away excellent goalscoring chances, the score would have been 2-0 or even an unbelievable 3-0 at the interval.

But, bonny fighters that they are, the Irishmen bounced back to produce a convincing second half display. Their reputations were salvaged with brilliant goals from Brotherston and McCurdie. So the Irish visitors returned home undefeated, but with a new respect for the standard of Soccer in far-off Australia.

Australia's coach Rudi Gutendorf commented that the main lesson to be learned from the Northern Ireland tour was that Australian players need full-time training if they are to compete successfully at the highest level.

He told me: "We must have 90 minute players—not players who can last only 75 minutes. The boys were leading in two of the three matches but finished leg-weary. If this is remedied, the future must be very bright."

Let us hope Rudi is right.

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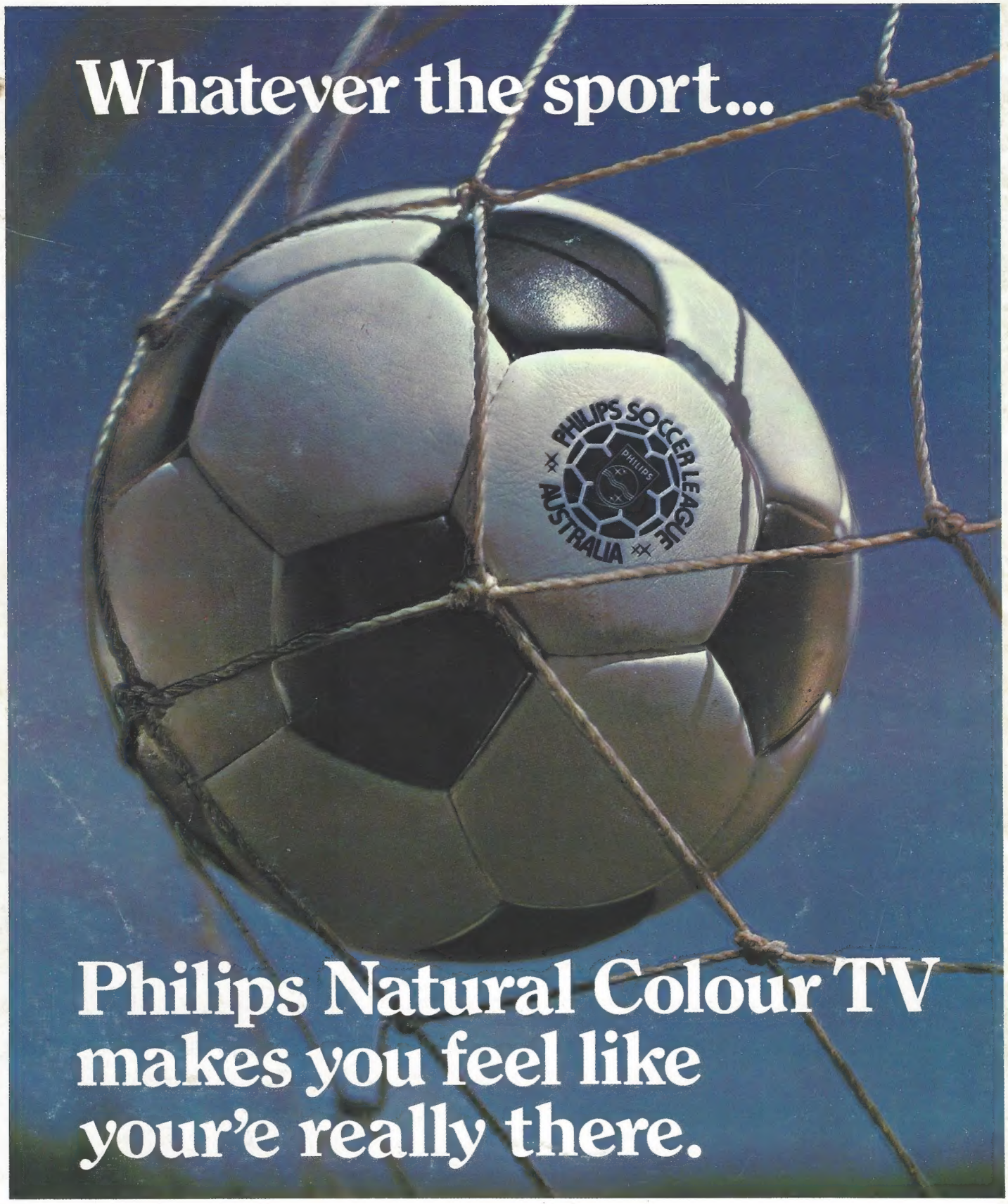

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